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Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

RE: Docket FD 36873, Support for the Proposed Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern Merger

Members of the Board:

I serve as SMART Transportation Division's State Safety and Legislative Director for Illinois, the rail hub of the nation, representing members in freight, commuter and passenger rail, with over 1,100 members at Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern alone. On behalf of the nearly 10,000 active and retired Illinois members of SMART-TD, I support approval of the proposed Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger. With over 32 years of railroad experience, and as someone who holds seniority on the Union Pacific to this day, I certainly have the perspective to make this endorsement with confidence.

As mentioned above, Illinois, and specifically Chicago, serves as the rail hub of the nation, but with that comes fluidity challenges through the region due to many competing interests, that's why SMART-TD has long supported the CREATE program, a public/private partnership aimed at reducing freight and passenger delays. Connecting UP's western network with NS's eastern network offers an opportunity to reduce interchange delays and give shippers faster, seamless service thru the region, as well as creating easier interchanges outside of the Chicagoland area altogether like in the southern suburbs, Bloomington/Normal, Decatur, Springfield and in the Metro East outside of St. Louis.

That kind of service will also attract freight now moving by truck on our highways. The Chicago region ranks as one of the most congested areas in North America, with major bottlenecks along the I-290, I-294 & I-88 corridors. As someone who routinely travels along those routes, when unavoidable, I can attest that increases in truck traffic over

recent years are a major cause of congestion. Heavy industrial shippers along these corridors and in the region would especially stand to benefit from faster, more efficient rail service. From my perspective, this merger will economically benefit the people of Illinois, as well as its railroaders. Moving freight from highways to rail is also a safety benefit for the national transportation network. Every shipment that shifts to a train means fewer heavy trucks on already over-crowded roads and highways.

Delivering faster service requires sufficient staffing. SMART-TD's Jobs for Life agreement protects covered railroaders and their crafts throughout their careers if this merger is approved and completed. That keeps experienced railroaders on the job who know the territory, the operating rules, and the customers, and who can expedite recovery of service when operations don't go as planned.

I ask the Board to approve the proposed merger with appropriate safeguards and oversight addressing safety, service reliability, shipper access, and community impacts. Approval of this merger, along with the SMART-TD agreement that accompanies it, will deliver a railroad that serves the needs of shippers faster and more reliably while keeping experienced railroaders on-the-job for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Guy
State Director

cc: Parties of Record